

## *Retreat from Gadara*

**Academic Freedom and Academic Anarchy**, by Sidney Hook, *New York: Cowles Book Company, 1969. 269 pp. \$5.95.*

**Academia in Anarchy: An Economic Diagnosis**, by James M. Buchanan and Nicos E. Devletoglou, *New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1970. 187 pp. \$5.95.*

**The Parsons College Bubble: A Tale of Higher Education in America**, by James D. Koerner, *New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1970. 236 pp. \$6.95.*

**Today's Academic Condition**, by Samuel B. Gould, *New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company and Syracuse University Press, 1970. 101 pp. \$4.95.*

MOST OF US have heard by this time that the kids are trying to tell us something. But which kids are trying to tell us what? As Professor Hook suggests, a majority at a majority of the colleges assert by their relative quiet that they are trying to get an education, sometimes against a systematic denial by a minority of the learning half of academic freedom. As for the minority, their message, (abating somewhat in volume now?) is clearer all the time. It still seems unyieldingly hostile, its intent still largely destructive, its impact on the outer world a rising and broadening invitation to despair of the United States. These readings are sufficiently bleak and sufficiently plausible to occasion gloom in important quarters. Yet it is strange that so few consider a quite different proposition: that what is actually before us, after a confusion of many years, is a deliverance.

Let us examine some particulars of the bill the kids bring against the American "arrangements," as Chancellor Heard has clarified them for the President:

There is a tendency toward an absolutist conception of moral values [which] helps to make it impossible for these students to be satisfied with the comparative superiority of the U. S. in striving for social justice and equality.

Rather than emphasize what is good about America, most students emphasize what could be better about America (which frequently appears to be an emphasis on what is wrong with America).

Any form of injustice and inequality, such as is evident in our racial problems, is taken as an indictment of the entire social system, regardless of its improvement over the past or its relative superiority over other societies. . . .

The Russians appear to repress their satellite countries, but students see that fact as parallel to the American domination in its sphere of influence (the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, economic exploitation, etc.)

Now every educated man for a generation has heard these themes in all their naïveté, romanticism and self-righteousness throughout the years of his education. Only amnesic adults believe them the spontaneous cry of this latest brood. Dr. Heard's summaries were and are the commonplaces of left faculty-club conversation and seminar colloquy. As aspiration they have obvious appeal, but they assume perfection on earth, hence the perfectibility of man. So they are unreal, and being unreal, uncongenial with constitutional, which is to say, limited government. Applying his formidable analysis to Professor Marcuse's vision of post-revolutionary beatitude, Hook finds "the logic of [the] position identical with that of . . . Christian divines. . . ." He hastens to supply the critical distinction: "The felicities of the future life for the [divines had their] locus in the Kingdom of Heaven, whereas Marcuse hopes for them on earth. . . ."

This is the true key, opening the puzzle. For Marcuse is merely the most spectacular among contemporaries, as was Marx in his time, of what men like Oakeshott and

Voegelin call the modern gnostics. These are merely the most extravagant of the genus that Oakeshott labels "rationalists": to them

"government" appears as a vast reservoir of power which inspires them to dream of what use might be made of it. They have favorite projects, of various dimensions, which they sincerely believe are for the benefit of mankind, and to capture this source of power, if necessary to increase it, and to use it for imposing their favorite projects upon their fellows is what they understand as the adventure of governing men. They are, thus, disposed to recognize government as an instrument of passion; the art of politics is to inflame and direct desire. . . .

But among the oldest sureties of conventional wisdom is that passion is impatient and desire insatiable. It is insatiability of infinite change and impatience with constitutional curbs thereon (varyingly anti-Congress, anti-Executive, anti-Court) which for a dozen college generations have marked the prevailing faculty thrust, at least in the liberal arts and much of social science, and at the elite schools. Of this some university administrators are at last aware, and some now concede that the colleges' wounds are largely self-inflicted. But the trouble with over-sleeping is that you may not realize how long the alarm has rung and how deeply the danger has had time to take root. When in the middle 'thirties Representative Martin Dies denounced "communism" on the campus, it was really the whole broad fret of political passion and desire that met his dismayed eye. He did not know that the true name of the peril was Oakeshott's rationalism, nor did Senator (Joseph) McCarthy know it fifteen years later. But there was this much intuitive accuracy in Dies and McCarthy: some communism there really was, and communism is the deadliest of all left passion and desire, though too narrow a tag for a generic ill. And for rationalists a little left of center, there could

be no enemies in the left spectrum, not even at the outermost sinister tip.

Both President Pusey of Harvard and Former President Perkins of Cornell have indulged in a brief reprise of anti-McCarthyism in their present troubles. Neither seems to realize even yet that the Dies-McCarthy alarums, filtered through objective vigilance and conservative wisdom, might have alerted the academy against Oakeshott's rationalists long before Mario Savio. As a newspaper commentator, writing more than twenty years ago, put it:

The sophisticated people, the delicately educated people, what might be called the prevailing American intelligentsia, have, by and large, left it to the political primitives to alert the Americans. . . . It is the primitives who have spoken an instinctive suspicion which wells out of the hearts of very large numbers of plain and unsophisticated people.

Not a hard-hat anywhere in 1970 America would disagree, but the now un-desked deans and abruptly terminated presidents are still prone to answer as did in 1950 the famous sinologist who was McCarthy's original target: "The very wording of this kind of journalism," said the sinologist, "recalls the old Nazi appeal to primitivism—the exhortation to 'think with the blood,' the encouragement of the mob to intimidate those who think with their brains. . . ."

Yet there were and are various sorts of intimidation: "The liberal [read rationalist] consensus within the academic community has served to intimidate conservatives much more than outside prying and criticism have inhibited those left-of-center," wrote Seymour Martin Lipset in 1959. But then, with a touch of prescience, he went on to say that "the larger social forces that push the intellectual community as a whole in a conservative direction may in the future also reduce this internal consensus on liberal political values, and allow the release of a more latent conservatism than has been apparent. . . ."

Right on! as the kids say. The denouement in our day is as Lipset suggested. The four professorial books here under review could, each in its own way, be called extrapolations from and corroborations of his scenario. He can hardly have anticipated the clamor in the colleges, involving many faculty, against due process itself and constitutional order. (Disorder, it is always to be stressed, and not dissent, is the true college treason. But Professor Hook's essays—the book is a collection of papers for various occasions—generally support the view that it was in the universities that the kids who have maimed the universities learned how to do it. When the rationalist president tried to get back into his ransacked and defiled sanctum, a voice from within—"nobody here but us chickens, all come home to roost"—told a melancholy truth. Professor Hook's ultimate warning is that the academy must reform itself to reassure a general society justly aroused, but prone, indeed, to loose the primitives if scholars continue to shirk the true defense of academic freedom.

Dr. Could, now retired as Chancellor of the State University of New York, echoes this admonition and suggests, not too clearly or persuasively, a "communiversity" which would blend a variety of educational modes and refresh community faith in professorial leadership. Mr. Koerner's book is a hilarious but by no means frivolous account of how an imaginative innovator with a basically sound idea and every executive gift but sense, one Millard George Roberts, blew the little church-related Parsons College into an immense wobbly bubble which spattered the whole community when the regional accreditation team pushed in its pin. Roberts' thing was simply that colleges must defend their independence by sound cost-accounting and profitability, the technique being the admission of practically everybody who could pay his own expensive way. Koerner, though he shows up Roberts' errors, which were large and ludicrous, nevertheless believes in greater institutional self-support as a means of de-

flecting creeping control by the rationalists in government.

Messrs. Buchanan and Devletoglou, both professors of economics, urge in their brisk and (as it seems) rather hastily assembled tract a return to market economics in college operations—a kind of respectabilizing, as it were, of Roberts' basic idea. The trouble with the colleges, they say, is that too much of their service is free. The consumer (i.e. student) condemns what costs him nothing, and the answer, therefore, is to charge him more, but let him say more about what he wants—assuming, that is, that he is truly educable and genuinely intent upon education. They would strike away such relics of antique monopoly as the rule of faculty tenure, for it is behind this hedge, say Buchanan and Devletoglou, that the leftish professors coddle the susceptible young in the ways of mischief.

Books like these support the theses on which the unpanicked have steadily relied since the original blow-up at Berkeley in 1964. Reform is, as ever, imperative in the universities as everywhere else, but in the universities, more than elsewhere perhaps, anarchy aborts reform. As so often in our modern time of troubles, there is a relevance in Burke's commentary on the great revolution which introduced the rationalists into politics with all their winsome dreams and monstrous applications. Beware of sophisters and coxcombs of philosophy, said Burke, and we need merely to apply Voegelin's gloss on Burke's short list to recognize how the species has proliferated in two hundred years: they are now, says Voegelin, "nationalist, progressive, and positivist, liberal and socialist, Marxian and Freudian" ideologues; they assert "biologism and psychologism . . . agnosticism . . . existentialism. . . ." Their name indeed is Legion, and their damage inside the universities and beyond may prove in part irreparable—as it has, say, in foreign policy. But from the irredeemables among them, in their several persons, we do now have a deliverance or an approach to one: they have cast themselves out and (to follow the

kids' love of porcine metaphor) have "run violently down a steep place into the sea."

Reviewed by C. P. IVES

---

## *The Plural Pronoun*

**The Right to Say We**, by Richard Zorza,  
New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970.  
214 pp. \$6.50, paper \$2.50.

THE NUMBER of books analyzing and explaining the student protest movement is proliferating at a rapid pace. Some are polemics in the cause of the protesters, others are attacks on them; still others make an attempt to be "objective," pointing out what are deemed to be valid criticisms expressed by the young rebels as well as the invalid tactics employed by them. Few books in any of these categories, however, can be called primary sources for an understanding of what is really happening on our campuses; but *The Right to Say We* does provide an important aid to what contemporary college students are thinking and doing, though this is not necessarily because it succeeds in presenting any particular "message" of its own.

Richard Zorza is a young Englishman and the son of Victor Zorza, an internationally known authority on the Soviet Union. He was a sophomore at Harvard during the student strike of April 1969, and in this book he reveals his generation's intense, almost mystical sense of unity and communion in its disenchantment both with the academic institutions in which its members find themselves and with the larger society into which they feel their lives have been "programmed." Young Mr. Zorza makes many statements which by any standard must be considered outrageous.

He tells us that he and the other *revoltés* "knew only too well that all the changes of recent years had come after the actions of extremists." The historical evidence that extremism soon begets an opposing extremism, that violence provokes counter-violence, that great social revolutions have led more often than not to reigns of terror, is something that he overlooks or chooses to ignore.

In describing the mass strike-meeting at Harvard the author mentions one student who had the audacity to announce that "he wanted to get back to his physics." Zorza goes on to relate that "this was met with astonishment—more sorrow than anger. To most it seemed incredible that anyone would react that way when so many were, for the first time, experiencing so much; when so many were trying so hard to improve the world, including physics." Just how the science of physics is improved by occupying the Harvard Yard, Mr. Zorza neglects to explain; but that many in the student movement have rejected the life of the mind, and are in fact distinctly anti-intellectual, is something that comes through repeatedly in his book. At one point, for example, he insists that the university "is only worth defending as an engine for change in society as a whole. The moment that it abandons that aim it becomes only a tool for the self-interest of its members. Then the case for preservation becomes much weaker. . . ." Here young Zorza is saying in effect that if the university does not promote social change—meaning, of course, the radical social change demanded by the New Left—then it has lost its reason for existence.

What troubles the reader is the seeming innocence with which such assertions are put forward and the assumption by the author that they are virtually self-evident. No one, apparently, has ever informed Mr. Zorza and others of his generation and opinion about what a university was meant to be. Woodrow Wilson's concept of a university—now seventy-two years in the past—seems to have disappeared.